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Barton Scoops Up Ex-Hulu Atty For IP Practice

By **Andrew Karpan**

Law360 (July 27, 2022, 1:03 PM EDT) -- Barton LLP is boosting its presence in Los Angeles and Nashville by hiring a partner who has done time as an in-house lawyer at Hulu — and who is also remarkably active in the professional fiddling circuit.

The firm said this month that it's adding Heather Bennett, a lawyer based in Los Angeles who had been operating under her own shingle for the past decade, in addition to picking up in-house licensing work for media companies in Los Angeles. The move comes less than a year after the mid-sized New York firm **opened** its debut outpost on the West Coast.

"Her expertise — particularly in digital content — will undoubtedly be a value-add to our sophisticated clients," Barton LLP's Roger E. Barton said in the firm's announcement of Bennett's hire.



Heather D. Bennett

Bennett told Law360 in an interview that she was particularly excited to have a chance to also do some work at Barton's office in Nashville, where she plans to split her time at the firm.

"I already spent quite a bit of time in Nashville as a musician," Bennett said. In 1983, when she was in high school, she won a first place trophy in her division from the National Oldtime Fiddlers Contest, an annual competition that still takes place in rural Idaho. She still actively plays the instrument and says she regularly jams with notable musicians like J'Anna Jacoby, who currently tours with Rod Stewart's backing band.

"The great thing about Nashville, you will find A-list musicians sitting down and jamming with anybody," she says, fondly reminiscing about a recent session with Kimber Ludiker from the band Della Mae, nominated for a Grammy for Best Bluegrass Album in 2014.

Bennett says that her turn to working with a firm that has a significant presence in Nashville comes just as she's also getting back into the competitive fiddling scene.

"I just competed in my first fiddle contest in 30 years last year," she said. That was the Grand Master Fiddler Championship, which takes place in the Tennessee capital of bluegrass music.

But when she isn't refining her award-winning talents on the fiddle, Bennett has been reviewing copyright documents for large multinational media companies. During her two-year stint at Hulu, she worked in the Disney-owned streamer's third-party content licensing division, though she admitted she "wouldn't say that it's the most colorful side of Hulu."

"The contracts that I worked on — I would say were for literally thousands of shows that were streamed at different times on the Hulu platform," says Bennett, who declined to point to any particular show she worked on. "I was intrigued at those contracts," she says, her interest drawn to the differing exploitation lengths identified in those contracts or the terms there that limited what kinds of advertisements the streamer would be allowed to shove into the programming.

"I would be geeking out on the terminology," she said, which she linked to playing the violin. "The smallest little note that you could put in would really change the whole deal and I think that's what's fascinating."

--Additional reporting by Matt Perez. Editing by Alyssa Miller.

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